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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Superintending School Committee,

OF THE TOWN OF LEE,

FOR THE YEAR 1873.

NEWMARKET, N. H. :

PRINTED AT THE WEEKLY ADVERTISER OFFICE.

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REPORT.

SUMMER TERMS

DISTRICT NO. 1.—*Turnpike.*

SAMUEL P. HOYT, Prudential Committee,

MRS. KATE H. DAVIS, Teacher. Whole number of pupils 35; average 30. Wages per month including board \$28.00.

This school is earning the right to be called the best in town. Both teacher and pupils deserve praise for their commendable efforts to accomplish a good amount of work. So far as our observations will allow us to judge, there can be no hesitancy on our part in saying that there was more real *teaching* done in this school during the term, than in any school in town during the last year and a half just past, and, too, for the first time we think during that period, has map drawing been taught in any school in town.

The closing examination showed a good degree of thoroughness in all the work of the term. This leads to the question of retaining a teacher, when he proves himself every way qualified for more than one term. In this particular school it will be very much to the advantage of all concerned if they retain Mrs. Davis for the next half-dozen terms. In all cases it takes from two to three weeks for a new teacher to get the school classified and in working order; and not before the end of the first three months will he get acquainted with the particular failings and wants of each particular pupil. That this knowledge of individuals is necessary, no thorough teacher will deny. Do not be afraid to hold out extra inducements to superior teachers. Mrs Davis was eminently successful in this school.

DISTRICT NO. 4.—*Hill*.

J TRUE BARTLETT, Prudential Committee.

MISS ARIANNA G. BARTLETT, Teacher. Attendance 30; average 24. Wages per month including board \$30.

The term was somewhat broken on account of sickness. This necessarily caused a less amount of work to be done, and also caused that which was done to be of a poorer quality than it otherwise would have been.

A person oppressed by the disagreeable sensations which precede sickness, or having only the fitful strength of convalescence can not throw into the work the life and enthusiasm which every true teacher possesses while in health. Just here it will not be amiss to suggest that it is the duty of the Prudential Committee to notify the Superintendent of the time the term is to begin, and the length of the term.

The term was eight weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 5.—*Hook*.

ISRAEL G. YORK, Prudential Committee.

MARY B. YORK, Teacher. Attendance 25; average 21. Wages per month including board \$24.

Miss York met with well deserved success, and the entire district agree in acceding the point. To a few of the pupils it would not be amiss to recommend a more thorough knowledge in place of the superficial and showy style which so many of us are apt to affect. To obtain this, both teacher and pupil must depend upon frequent reviews. Pupils make a serious mistake when they object to "reciting yesterday's lesson to-day."

The term was eight weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 6 — *Wadley's*.

MOSES N. DAVIS, Prudential Committee.

IDA K. BLAKE, Teacher. Attendance 25; average 20. Wages per month including board \$30.

Miss Blake came to this school with some little experience in teaching, and took hold of the work as if she meant to succeed, if possible. Whether the school was a success can not

be directly told here, as the school was not visited at its close, owing to the sickness of the teacher. At the beginning of the term Miss Blake seemed to be working hard and very much interested. Whatever else is said of the school must be from public opinion. The district were divided as to her success. Some said that the term was a thorough success, others, that it was a failure, so far as the larger pupils were concerned. None said that Miss Blake did not do the best she knew. If she was not qualified for the position, the fault lies at the Superintending Committee's door. Concerning one thing there can be no question: namely, so long as individuals carry their personal dislikes and prejudices into school affairs, so long will the school not approach even moderately near perfection.

The term was ten weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 7.—*Langs.*

GEORGE K. HUCKINS, Prudential Committee

ABBIE EWER, Teacher. Attendance 20; average $18\frac{2}{3}$.
Wages per month including board \$28.

This is still the banner school in regard to "order." The teacher would do well to infuse a little more life and enthusiasm into the teaching; it would be better for her pupils, and very pleasing to the committee. At the closing examination some of the classes did very finely. Here, as in one or two other districts, we were pleased to find the teacher gave English Grammar something like its fair share of attention.

The term was seven weeks long.

REMARKS.

Our remarks must necessarily be rather in the form of assertion than of argument, since space must be left for our successor. The person who visits the several schools in town, will find that one great want felt by the teachers, is lack of time—time to give each class the attention due to it. The sources of this difficulty are three: namely: work of the day not properly laid out in a written and posted programme, lack of uniformity of text books, and imperfect classification of pu-

pils. For the correction of the first we must look to the teachers. When you visit the school, ask to see the order of exercises; by it you can 'judge of the teacher's judgement,' and consequent fitness. To overcome the second obstacle, the combined efforts of teachers, parents and committee will be required. Parents should consult the Superintendent before purchasing new text books, unless they are positively certain that they know the grade required and what is the authorized series. But we must not think that this is a question which the Superintendent can answer at any time and place in which we may happen to find him. The consideration of this question should always be at the close of one term of school in regard to the books and work of the succeeding term. The discussion of this point leads us to the question of State Uniformity of Text Books, and it may be allowable to suggest to the people through this Report, that it will be decidedly to the credit of Lee, if her voice be heard loud and strong in favor of this important step, when it shall come up in the legislature.

A word to the Prudential Committees in regard to the frequent changes of teachers may not be out of place. These frequent changes are a great hindrance to the improvement of our schools, operating with almost unvarying constancy from year to year. Perhaps our school officers are not aware to what extent these changes retard the progress of education in our schools. Ought not the rule to be: "Get good teachers and then keep them as long as possible?" A teacher entering a school with which he is unacquainted, must acquaint himself with the dispositions, capacities and attainments of his pupils before he can begin the work of their instruction with advantage. The natural diffidence of pupils prevents their improvement under the instruction of a stranger, and a mode of instruction differing from that to which they have become accustomed will operate in the same way.

A new teacher can not take up the process of instruction just where his predecessor left it; hence a considerable portion of a brief school term is lost. Do not let a few dollars per month in wages weigh in the balance against the obvious advantages of re-employment. The evils of frequent change are recognized in business. Every business man considers a change of agents or clerks to be a serious injury. To change teachers

is often to change from certainty to uncertainty; remembering, always, that we can not get rid of an incompetent teacher too soon. The permanent instructor feels his responsibilities, and has many motives to more strenuous effort.

In engaging a teacher let us beware of the untrained, inexperienced applicant, and remember that in all lines of effort, "excellence of work depends upon care in training, and that the school of unguided experience is the most expensive of all schools." A renowned French oculist on being asked how he acquired his wonderful skill, replied: "My skill cost a hatful of eyes." Have we roomfuls of pupils on which untrained and inexperienced teachers may practice until they have gained by the experience of a half-dozen years that which they might learn in a Normal School in one year? It is asked if sufficient preparation can not be obtained by attendance upon the exercises of a teacher's Class or Normal Department in a High School or Academy? The question indicates an imperfect knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of the Normal School as contrasted with the High School or Academy. Each has its peculiar work. The plan of thus supplying competent teachers has been persistently tried in various States, but with unsatisfactory results. From a large amount of evidence at hand which supports this statement, attention is called to the following report of a committee of the legislature of New York, in 1844:—"In the judgement of successive superintendents of common schools, the Regents of the University, and the most eminent and practical friends of education throughout the State, these Institutions, whether considered in the aggregate or with reference to those especially designated, from time to time, for the performance of this important duty of supplying the common schools with competent teachers, have not succeeded in the accomplishment of that object." And this report was made after the State had for many years made liberal appropriations for the support of Normal departments in Academies.

In view of this, is it too much to ask of the applicant for the position of teacher in one of our schools, that such applicant come to us recommended either by successful experience, or special training in a Normal School? The interest of the majority, and not of a few individuals is always to be considered in all questions which concern the people at large.

These Remarks are the result of observation of the work

and wants of our schools, and the points touched upon are deemed worth your serious attention and discussion. The summing up of the work of the year, and the special wants of the several districts must, naturally, be left to our successor.

T. J. DAVIS,

Superintending School Committee of Lee.

Lee, N. H., Sept. 25, 1873.

WINTER TERMS.

DISTRICT NO. 1.—*Turnpike.*

SAMUEL P. HOYT, Prudential Committee,

MRS. KATE H. DAVIS, Teacher. Whole number of pupils 30; average 22. Wages per month including board \$28.00.

This school was very fortunate in being placed under the care of an experienced teacher, and I only wish that every other district in town would be lucky enough to find a teacher who is as well qualified as I regard the one who has had the charge of District No. 1 for the past winter. At our several visits we found the school under excellent discipline. The classes were well arranged and the pupils studious. It is seldom we visit a school where all the classes or recitations passed off so promptly and correctly as this. In the teacher's report she says: "it is with pleasure I look over the past and feel that I was not expected to do all the work *alone*, as it is too often the teacher's lot, but that my pupils have most of them worked for themselves, and it is with feelings of gratitude which I owe not only to my scholars, but to their parents for the interest manifested in my behalf." Several of the parents were present at the closing examination which gave an indication that they have an interest in the welfare of their children.

The term was fifteen weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 2.—*Mast Road*

MISS MARY YORK of Lee, Teacher. Attendance, Average,

But one term during the year. This school at its final close was very pleasing, although the numbers were small, the examination passed off in a very satisfactory manner. The improvement made was good. The teacher seemed to be do-

ing her duty. The scholars were orderly, and gave evidence of their having received good instruction.

The school was _____ weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 3 — *Wednesday Hill.*

Miss EDNA HOBBS, Teacher. Attendance, 7; Average $5\frac{7}{8}$.

But one term during the year. This was her first experience at "school keeping," yet she succeeded well in her new vocation. This is a very small school, only five scholars being present at the closing examination. We think she was well qualified for this school, and labored zealously for the improvement of her pupils. 'Tis true she had but a small opportunity to discover to her own satisfaction or that of others what she might do in a broader field of labor. We think she may well be encouraged to persevere, and, we doubt not but that with more experience will make a first class teacher.

The term was $9\frac{2}{3}$ weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 4. — *Hill.*

J TRUE BARTLETT, Prudential Committee.

Miss RHODA J. DAVIS, Teacher. Attendance, 34; Average attendance, 29.

In her efforts to govern her school through love rather than fear, she was quite successful; we should judge from the appearance of the several classes at our final visit that much improvement had been made during the term. In the teacher's report she says; "The school is very pleasant; the scholars intelligent and active. I have enjoyed the term."

The term was $11\frac{2}{3}$ weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 5. — *Hook.*

ISRAEL G. YORK, Prudential Committee.

Miss ARIANNA G. BARTLETT, Teacher. Attendance, 29; Average attendance, $26\frac{2}{3}$.

Here we found a teacher who appeared truly zealous in her vocation, and I think labored industriously for the advancement of her pupils, and we take pleasure in saying that her efforts were crowned with good success. The improvement made was good in all the branches pursued.

The term was ten weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 6 — *Wadley's*.

MOSES N. DAVIS, Prudential Committee.

MISS SYLVIA W. LADD, Teacher. Attendance, 27; average, 18.

Miss Ladd came well recommended and passed a good examination. We think she is well qualified to instruct all the various branches required to be taught in our common schools. We think, too, she did her best for the improvement of her pupils. Yet this school was hardly the place or proper sphere for her labor, and although all the citizens of the district may not agree with us, we say the parents have a great deal to do with the government or discipline of a school. Horace Mann once said he "cared not how dirty or ragged the children were, if their parents hadn't long ears at home." It is useless to think a teacher, young or old, will meet with good success in *any* school unless they have the co-operation of the parents. Human nature is the same the world over, and we sometimes find parents who will say thus: "you may thrash Mr. A's boy, but don't you touch mine;" and we think that this district is not *entirely* exempt from such people. The review of the different classes at the closing examination was gratifying to the committee and highly creditable to the pupils.

The term was $15\frac{2}{3}$ weeks long.

DISTRICT NO. 7. — *Langs*.

GEORGE K. HUCKINS, Prudential Committee.

ABBIE EWER, Teacher. Attendance 18; average $14\frac{1}{2}$.

Miss Ewer appeared faithfully devoted to her work, and by her kind and amiable disposition she won the esteem of all her scholars. The school appeared well and orderly, and although there was a lack of promptness in some of the recitations at the closing examination the improvement was very commendable.

The term was fifteen weeks long.

The town is well aware that I was appointed to fill the vacancy of Superintending School Committee made by the retirement of Mr. T. J. Davis. I refrain from making any further remarks, hoping that the suggestions made by Mr. Davis will be candidly read.

GEO. E. DURGIN, *Superintending School Committee*.

Lee, March, 1874.



